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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

S E C R E T ASHGABAT 000839

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STATE FOR SCA/CEN, DS/IP/SCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/15/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [ASEC](#) [TX](#)
SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: PRESIDENT APPROVES WORKING TO
RESTART SURVEILLANCE DETECTION PROGRAM

REF: ASHGABAT 0780

Classified By: CDA RICHARD E. HOAGLAND FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (S) At the end of their August 14 meeting, EEB Assistant Secretary Daniel Sullivan asked to meet briefly one-on-one

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with President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov. Sullivan delivered the following talking points:

-- Mr. President, I have a very important but sensitive favor to ask of you. I would like to ask that you allow our embassy to restart its Surveillance Detection program.

-- No matter what you may have heard, I want to assure you that this important program is solely for the protection of our own embassy and its employees, including citizens of Turkmenistan. It has no other purpose, either here or anywhere else in the world.

-- We will be totally transparent about it with your government, and would welcome representatives of your law-enforcement and security agencies to participate in it fully and at all times.

¶2. (S) Berdimuhamedov responded, "We are not against this program in principle, but the issue is how you implement it. Our law-enforcement organs have facts, clear facts, that you violated our law. No one has the right to violate our law. We need to establish clear limits for this program. I will instruct the foreign ministry and law-enforcement organs to work with your embassy so we have mutually agreed limits."

¶3. (S) COMMENT: Charge will follow up with Foreign Minister Meredov. We believe Berdimuhamedov's intention is that we draw up a memorandum of understanding about the program and its implementation. This will not come quickly or easily, but we are optimistic that it is doable. END COMMENT.

HOAGLAND